

Transforming the Profession of Teaching in a Changing Society: Teaching as Philosophical Inquiry and Stanley Cavell's *The Senses of Walden*

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This paper examines an alternative view of teacher education that enables teachers to redefine their image and mission in the changing society of Japan. This vision is inspired by and draws upon the educational and philosophical thoughts of nineteenth-century American writers such as Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau, and contemporary Harvard philosopher Stanley Cavell. The paper first clarifies the nature of bewilderment regarding teachers' professional identities, basically following the changes accompanying the end of the era of modernization efforts. Recently, teachers have been forced to yield their historically secure and respected positions in their communities, because not a small number of people have begun to doubt the validity and efficiency of school education and teacher education. The article therefore examines the necessity and possibility of an alternative approach to teacher education, which reclaims space for teachers philosophical questioning about their lost identities as well as the mission and practice of teacher education itself in an age of crisis for teachers (and students). Finally, the archetype of teacher education is unearthed from a correlation between Cavell and other writers on whom his moral and educational theories are based, namely Henry David Thoreau and Ralph Waldo Emerson. The philosophical interplay of these philosophers shapes the view of teacher education as a creative place in which teachers can question their roles. It is not questioning in the form of irresponsible criticism by someone isolated from society, but it is rather a voice of awakening, a voice that challenges the language in which one dwells, and an expression of social transformation from within. This portrait of teacher education conversely brings light to the rediscovery of what makes teachers teachers: a creative commitment to the society, in which teachers work through their language.

1 Introduction

In Japan, the title (and occasionally salutation) *sensei* ("teacher") used to be considered something substantial. Though *sensei* may also represent doctors, politicians, and other people with

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specialized knowledge and skills, the term is most commonly used to show respect for a teacher. Nevertheless, the aura of *sensei* has almost disappeared in twenty-first century Japan as teaching is losing its traditional status as an honored occupation.¹

There is a need to empower teachers who are in search of their professional identities. As a way of responding to their urgent needs, this paper shall explore Thoreau's and Cavell's philosophy of "awakening." I shall demonstrate that this philosophy can help in finding an alternative space for teacher education, a space in which a teacher's voice is found through experimental questioning. First, I shall argue how teachers in Japan are confronted with a breakdown of their historical status in a community. This is followed by a call for teacher education in which teachers are able to develop their own philosophies of education. Second, to reorient teacher education towards the task of teachers' philosophical inquiry into their professional identities, the idea of "philosophy" itself shall be reexamined through the lens of Stanley Cavell.

Cavell is a philosopher who shows us a dimension of life in which philosophy is redefined as the process of education—one that involves the perfection of self and society. He illustrates this by recounting the writings of Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau as legendary prophets. They inspire people who are in a state of numbness in their spiritual and existential crisis, or in the words of these prophets' "captivity". In my conclusion, I shall argue that teacher education, through philosophical questioning, can lead teachers to self-engagement and social transformation. I will examine how Cavell attempts to interpret Thoreau by tracing how he responds to the writings of Ralph Waldo Emerson, who was the most significant figure in Thoreau's intellectual upbringing. This will demonstrate how teacher education can encourage teachers to become more conscious about the way in which they read and write, namely, their language.

2 Teachers in Japan: Agents in a Changing Society

Historically, Japanese teachers had been provided a "respected place" in their communities (Lee, 1998, 170). Since the economic bubble burst, there have been signs that teacher's conventional status is in decline. Yoshiyuki Kudomi refers to the 1990's as an "Era of Hardship" for Japanese teachers, based on his research that covers widespread disorder in the classrooms and exhaustion and illness found among teachers (1991, 69). Manabu Sato and Shigeru Asanuma conceive this phenomenon to be "a professional identity crisis" of teachers (2000, 126). Sato even argues that teachers no longer teach students, but are rather public servants who are deprived of autonomy in intellectual activities, having to focus on satisfying the demands of parents as well as of students (1992, 161). June Gordon agrees that teachers in Japan have struggled in the midst of socioeconomic change: "Traditional values of respect for schooling and teachers," in particular, "have faded into a consumer-oriented demand for schooling (2005a, 459)." This echoes Kudomi's analysis (1991, 78): "Theoretically and historically school knowledge and school teachers have been given" "privileged status," but now this is no longer the case.

How can teacher education possibly help teachers out of this predicament? Before responding to this question, it is necessary to consider the characteristics of Japanese teacher education. Nobuo Shimahara says, "Japanese teacher education has been distinctly influenced by the predominant national ideologies of particular times (1995, 155)." This is rooted in the Japanese school system itself, which has been created and developed in "anticipation of industrial development" since the Meiji period (1968-1912) (Ibid., 156). Thus, teachers have been "viewed as agents of

character development and nation-building” from the “inception of formal teacher education at the dawn of Japan’s modernization (Ibid., 155).” While Shimahara defines teachers as “agents” of “nation building,” Kudomi calls them “knowledge transmitter [s],” i. e., agents who transmit knowledge that is “legitimate” in Japanese society (1991, 78). The idea that teachers are placed on a pedestal has been guaranteed by Japan’s government and industries as long as they contribute to streams of modernization, streams of European knowledge and Western technology. Once the distribution system starts to malfunction because of the winding down of active modernization and the dawn of post-modern, post-industrialized Japan (Gordon, 2005b, 60; Kudomi, 1991, 78; Sato, 1992, 125), the teacher, as transmitter of these concepts, suffers as a cog in the system.

Given these conditions, there are two changes that those in charge of teacher education can make for the betterment of teachers, which include teacher qualifications and improving the teacher environment. The first change is to revitalize the distribution system by adopting a new ideology that can meet the needs of a rebuilding nation. The second change is to stop acting as a producer of “transmitters,” and instead create a new role for teacher education. Naoko Saito examines ongoing educational reform in which the plausible outcome of the first change is exemplified. She says that in postindustrial countries such as the United States, the United Kingdom, and Japan, education today is “so often driven by assumptions of gaining and raising,” (for example, raising standards or increasing school effectiveness) and these are the ideas that permeate “the language of educational reforms in the globalized economy (2005, 129).” She claims that such attempts have caused a loss of sensitivity to what cannot be measured and captured by the rhetoric of the global economy, i. e., the sense of “the lost individual”² who silently but undeniably sits “behind the drive toward gaining (Ibid., 132).” Thus these conditions would indicate “the crisis of nihilism in democracy and education (Ibid., 131-132).” Although the notion of gaining and raising was, of course, the Japanese government’s central concern in the era of modernization, what is critical for contemporary teachers is that no one can ever be officially assigned and trained as “agents” of globalization. Unlike modernization, which established a foundation for teaching in the form of enlightenment (Shimahara, 1995, 165), globalization cannot function as either a national or an educational ideology; it transgresses national boundaries, for one thing, and it obscures educational goals, which traditionally have been dominated by national agendas.³ Considering that the tide of globalization is much too fluid to be effectively incorporated into educational policy, it is fair to conclude that history has not allowed us (at least so far) to find an alternative ideology that is as forceful and consistent as modernization.

This leads us to explore the second change. This change allows us to take the current predicament of teachers as an opportunity to abandon conventional teacher education, which has been, as Shimahara puts it, decidedly manipulated by the national ideologies (1995, 165). Shimahara’s caution resonates in the following discussion of teacher education between Pádraig Hogan and Richard Smith:

...[I]t is important that teachers be equipped and encouraged to develop their own philosophy of education and not simply because to accede to whatever notion of delivery, transferable skills, or preparation for the world of work happens to be fashionable at the time. (2003, 178)

In an Era of Hardship, in which a nation is incapable of developing an alternative ideology, the role of teacher education emerges to reclaim a place for teachers’ “philosophical” inquiry, a

kind of an inquiry that will enable them to reflect upon the nature of their predicament in the deepest sense. Such a place might be embodied in a tangible room of conversation in teachers' community or may emerge as a conceptual atmosphere nourished among teachers' minds. Nevertheless, this would contribute to teachers' survival during this difficult period, although it neither sharpens their skills as information transmitters nor does it instill them with any new knowledge to distribute to their students. In the process of developing and internalizing their own philosophies, teachers simultaneously redefine their sense of mission and self-respect. It emancipates them from the existing framework of education and enables them to situate themselves within a changing society and even to participate in social change. A question remains of how could such an alternative space for teacher education be possible? What does teacher education combined with philosophical inquiry look like? These questions will be discussed in the next section.

3 The Relationship between Teachers and Philosophers

In their examination of teachers' predicament in contemporary Japan, observers come to an awareness of the need for a different type of teacher education: one in which teachers are drawn to work on their own philosophy of education. The catch, however, is that some are tempted to use "philosophy" as a means to remedy the present predicament of teachers. For example, a "philosophical" claim can be made that the teaching profession should be justified as a sacred calling in the name of great philosophers. Richard Eldridge asserts that this is a kind of instrumental application of philosophy and therefore, a betrayal of the mission of philosophy (2003, 174). In this view philosophy should promise something deeper than personal satisfaction and professional interests. While emphasizing that philosophy should be engaged in the quest for happiness, Eldridge elaborates upon the idea of happiness as the achievement of freedom, rather than as the mere satisfaction of individual preferences. This image is derived from Cavell's view that "rebirth" is derived from envisioning philosophy (Ibid.). Eldridge quotes from Cavell's *The Senses of Walden*, "we are not free, not whole, not new, and we know this and are on a downward path of despair because of it; and that ... for a grownup to grow he requires strangeness and transformation, i. e., rebirth (1972, 71)." According to Eldridge, Cavell holds that philosophy begins with the Socratic ambition—an aspiration of self in the state of imprisonment, moving toward the light of freedom. Cavell echoes this aspiration, following Emerson and Thoreau, and in company with Wittgenstein, Heidegger, Plato, and Rousseau (Eldridge, 2003, 174).⁴

To further clarify the meaning of "philosophy" of education, it is useful at this point to look at the conduct of those who attempt to reconstruct its meaning. In this regard, Richard Eldridge mentions three philosophers whose works have relevance to the professional identities of teachers. Eldridge remarks that the writings of Thoreau, Emerson, and Cavell have "qualities of *aversiveness* to the ordinary transmission of a settled message: a certain sense of tentativeness and self-revision, a foregrounding of the writer's own starts and turns and halts (Ibid., 180)." This points us to a new direction for teacher education. Developing one's own philosophy does not happen out of the blue. Rather, the process can be enhanced, as Eldridge suggests, by averting conventional practice (which is the conveying of fixed content in teaching). He also says, "their writing enacts a sense of *seeking* to be on the way out of present straits" and that "our getting on the way is enabled... by imperfect present conditions (Ibid.)." It is clear that, according to Eldridge, those thinkers proceed with their thinking not by simply ignoring and deploring the present conditions, but

by carefully paying attention to them, and by hoping to find a way out of them. Espen Hammer notes, “Cavell’s *The Senses of Walden* is itself permeated by a feeling of alarm” about America’s civil unrest and geopolitical warfare at that time (2002, 139).⁵

This sense of aversion and alarm is also the case with Thoreau’s *Walden*. Hammer continues: “Thoreau’s writing as responding to a deep-seated sense of disappointment” addresses the crisis occurring “on both personal and cosmological levels” as well as that of its “political nature (Ibid.).” Thoreau’s physical withdrawal to Walden Pond was his “search for ways to exercise his political voice more responsibly (Ibid.).” This reverses the view that Thoreau is a secluded pundit, and gives a perspective that he engages in society as a member of it, through leaving a town and writing to townsmen “to wake my neighbors up (Thoreau, 1997, 5).” Thus, developing teacher education in and with “philosophical” inquiry does not mean that teachers should become otherworldly reflective or irresponsibly argumentative. Rather, philosophy here implies a process that may contain or enable teachers’ deliberate and original examination of a message they otherwise unconsciously transmit.

The idea of philosophy here as deliberate examination, or aversion, of conventional conditions is proposed originally by Emerson. Cavell argues this issue extensively in a chapter entitled “Aversive Thinking” in his book, *Conditions Handsome and Unhandsome: The Constitution of Emersonian Perfectionism* (1990, 30-63). Paul Standish points out that Cavell intentionally connects Thoreau’s language with that of the Old Testament prophets, particularly Ezekiel and Jeremiah, and represents Thoreau as a new prophet (Standish, 2006, 148). Some may wonder about the connection of these prophets to Japanese teachers and the way they are trained. From Cavellian perspective, however, a task of prophets is as divided and doubled as that of teachers. On the one hand, their main function is transmitting a message. On the other hand, what distinguishes them from other professions, such as messengers or reporters, is that they examine and question the message by themselves. Cavell depicts this task through his rereading of Thoreau. Cavell says: “It is Ezekiel who anticipates most specifically the condition of prophecy in *Walden* (1972, 17).” In what way, however, does Cavell identify Thoreau as the same kind of prophet as Ezekiel or Jeremiah? Cavell reads that what they have in common is that they courageously raise their voices in time of crisis, namely that of captivity (Ibid., 18). Thus, their aim ought to be emancipation from those conditions. Subsequently, what does emancipation mean to each prophet? The prophets in the Old Testament and *Walden* are deeply engaged in awakening. Standish states:

The Old Testament prophets were charged with the responsibility of alerting the people to the ways in which their lives had become corrupt, and of insisting on the ways in which they had, as it were, become blind or deaf to this. They foretold of a world-to-come. The former function is symbolized in Thoreau’s book by the figure of the cockerel: he will brag as loudly as a morning cockerel in order to wake his fellow citizens up, for they have gone to sleep in their lives. (2006, 148)

Thoreau is a prophet because he tries to wake his fellows from a state of sleep or corruption, as did Ezekiel and Jeremiah. Still, the vision of the prophet remains opaque, especially in terms of their conduct in awakening others. How do they awaken people in society? Here, distinguishing prophets from fortunetellers helps us to see a clearer picture. Looking at Standish’s description again shows that, on the one hand, prophets are those who foretell a world-to-come and take responsibility for this commitment to their truth. On the other hand, fortunetellers anticipate

something about the future but do not necessarily take responsibility for their words. (The dividing line between the two seems even clearer when we remember that prominent prophets often lost their lives because of their challenging statements.) While fortunetellers respond to individual interests by making specific predictions, prophets participate in and exemplify the transformation of an individual and society through establishing and implementing their words, messages, and vision. Therefore, awakening has nothing to do with an authoritarian instruction that is broadcast from a conventional standpoint. Rather, it is the prophet's commitment to the transformation of the internal and external state of their fellow citizens. For Cavell, philosophy is inseparable from this art of awakening.

At this point, a question emerges from a different angle of the concept of awakening: what does one look like when being awakened? Responding to this question will demonstrate the way in which teachers wake learners and how teachers become teachers through awakening.

4 Awakening in Cavellian Teacher Education

How can awakening be experienced by each individual? Cavell describes the process of awakening as follows:

He awakes twice. First the impression of a question or questions which are the final recapitulation and placing of those questions with which his book begins... That they have been asked while asleep—by sleeping men to a man in a crisis of awakening—does not mean they have no answers. His second waking is to an answered question, i. e., to the fact that the questions have already been answered—or else that the answer is in vain and the question, therefore, not understood. (1972, 100)

The first awakening is caused by sleeping men asking. The second moment of awakening comes as recognition that the questions have already been answered. What does this mean? The occurrence of “the double,” according to Cavell, plays a key role in making sense of this process:

In “Solitude,” it is the double who is the spectator, and I who am the scene of occurrence. The impersonality, or impartiality, of *Walden's* double is the spiritual breakthrough from yearning and patience which releases its writer's capacity for action. (Ibid., 102)

The reason that the questions have already been answered is because they have already existed and have been discussed within the existing framework of a self and society. Eventually, one comes to doubt any precondition that makes such transactions possible. At the first stage, one can ask and be asked questions by people in a state of corruption or captivity. Dissimilarly, the second stage needs someone who is outside of oneself and society. Thoreau and Cavell identify such an existence as “the double.” The double is a copy neither of oneself nor of others in society. The double exists, as Cavell states, inside oneself but it emerges as a stranger. Such an emergence is obviously not comfortable at first, and this is why Cavell depicts the awakening as a crisis in the quotation above. In spite of the pain of that moment, it is indeed a spiritual breakthrough, and, as a consequence, the writer's capacity for action is released from captivity (in this case, from a pre-

existing context of one's mind and society's system). The fact that the writer's capacity for action is released certainly suggests the emancipation of the power of writing, which in turn elucidates the writer's own philosophy.

Still, the most important question remains: how could the emergence of the double be possible? Again, Cavell says: "To allow the world to change, and to learn change from it, to permit it strangers, accepting its own strangeness, are conditions of knowing it now (Ibid., 119)." What Cavell and Thoreau try to accomplish through writing as philosophizing is not to cling to the world as it used to be, the worldview that someone has already systematized. It is more like a process being carried out in the very midst of perpetuating change. We are changing beings. The world is inevitably moving. Acknowledging it, and acknowledging how it is so, is achieved through the questions that we face when we redefine ourselves in imperfect conditions. This is also the case with awakening. The double does not come from somewhere else. It emerges from inside ourselves, all at once, when we read what is really going on within ourselves and in front of ourselves. What is at stake is whether we encounter a friend, either in person or in a written book, a friend who philosophically challenges us and shakes our senses in order for us to sense what we have not yet sensed.

Here, the role of teacher education comes to the surface. It is by no means a manufacturing program to push teachers into a fixed social frame. This sort of teacher education may work to a certain extent in a seemingly stable society. In contrast, in an age of crisis, it cannot effectively follow an elusive social frame that abruptly changes from day to day. It more or less results in reducing the teachers' mission to precariously following a fortuneteller—or to pretending to be one. Cavellian teacher education is rather something that would help teachers participate in the process of self and in social transformation. Teachers can be involved in that process through the practice of philosophical writing: they are inspired; they raise voices; they awaken. Consequently, one can see a line of provocation here—teacher education thrives with the teachers' self-awakening through words, but simultaneously, this is enabled and inspired by listening to other teachers' voices, i. e., philosophical questioning underlies the daily exercise of teachers. In this sense, teacher education is not the teaching of teachers, but the *learning* of teachers who are inspired by other teachers' learning. Teacher education ought to be an active process and the result of every teacher's philosophical questioning: Who are teachers? Why do teachers teach? What do teachers teach? More importantly, teachers reconstruct their identities as teachers in a changing world when they participate in transforming social and personal conditions. A teacher as a prophet, through her own writing, relays and represents the potential awakening of students.

There is a danger, however, that this view of teacher education as a catalyst for self-transformation may seem too naïve. It is naïve, one may speculate, because such a view rests on the simplistic notion that personal transformation can create social change. It thus must be emphasized that the type of teacher education that this paper suggests is rather a challenging experiment in creating an alternative space within teacher education itself, to allow for institutionalized teacher education to be reconstructed from within. This is reinforced in light of the fact that Cavell and Thoreau are not just some secluded philosophers in the woods. On the contrary, their lens helps us to see that self-transformation is not simply a matter of personal awakening, but the crucial factor in reviving the image and mission of teachers. Since the image and mission are reproduced in both society's and teachers' mindsets, Cavellian teacher education questions what teachers are and should be for the task of reconstructing their own society. In this regard, the way in which teachers have access to their society shall be explored. This will illustrate that teacher education in and

with philosophical inquiry does not necessarily result in self-complacency through a process of unworldly inner reflection.

Thoreau's philosophical endeavor, namely writing *Walden*, takes place in connection with other minds, with his language community, and with his own nation, America. How do they mutually relate? The answer to that question lies in how Cavell explicates *Walden*'s underlying correspondence with Emerson's philosophy. At the beginning of *The Senses of Walden*, Cavell notes:

To discover how to earn and spend our most wakeful hours—whatever we are doing—is the task of *Walden* as a whole; it follows that its task, for us who are reading, is epitomized in discovering what reading in a high sense is and, in particular, if *Walden* is a heroic book, what reading *Walden* is. (Ibid., 5)

Here Cavell suggests that *Walden* might be a heroic book. Also, on the final page of his book, he concludes:

The hero departs from his hut and goes into an unknown wood from whose mysteries he wins a boon that he brings back to his neighbors. (Ibid., 119)

Here again, he mentions his interest in the book's hero or in the book's heroic attempt. It is evident that Cavell reads *Walden* as a heroic book and that he centralizes the concept of a hero throughout his writing.

What does a hero mean to Cavell? He depicts one as follows:

We started thinking along one line about what the writer of *Walden* calls "heroic books".... In Thoreau's adolescence, the call for the creation of an American literature was still at a height: it was to be the final proof of the nation's maturity, proof that its errand among nations had been accomplished, that its specialness had permitted and in turn been proved by an original intelligence. In these circumstances, an epic ambition would be the ambition to compose the nation's first epic. (Ibid., 13)

A heroic book, to Cavell, is therefore an ambitious epic that aims to complete the legacy of founding a nation in a higher sense. Clearly, Thoreau's *Walden* is the powerful embodiment of this concept. In *The Senses of Walden*, Cavell repeatedly reveals Thoreau's attempts to show what makes America, what America is, and what is necessary to perfect America's nature and vision. This is also the case with the task of teacher education with and in philosophical inquiry. In such teacher education, teachers are encouraged to develop their own sense of being a teacher beyond national ideology, but it does not mean that they turn away from the nation and society in which they belong. Rather, they engage with nation-building or epic writing by searching for a boon that they can bring back to their neighbors, i. e., awakening and questioning.

This picture of *Walden*'s writer is associated with Emerson's notion of "[t]he scholar of the first age" in his celebrated essay, "The American Scholar (Emerson, 1990, 40)." After he praises the theory of books as noble, Emerson continues:

The scholar of the first age received into him the world around; brooded thereon; gave it

the new arrangement of his own mind, and uttered it again. It came into him, life; it went out from him, truth. It came to him, short-lived actions; it went out from him, immortal thoughts. It came to him, business; it went from him, poetry.... It now endures, it now flies, it now inspires. (Ibid.)

One may see what Emerson considers a noble—and heroic—theory in reading and writing a book. Emerson's task as a philosopher is neither a collection, repetition, nor negation of someone else's opinions. Rather, it seems to originate from the writer's reading of texts or of the world itself. It is a personal reflection of the writer's life, and it is also poetry, which connects one's mind with other people's, reaching over time and space. To put it differently, Thoreau receives Emerson's idea of "The American Scholar," and he writes *Walden* by means of recounting Emerson's thoughts. This is not to say that Thoreau plagiarizes Emerson's concepts; rather, he invents his own picture of a scholar in his own mind and words, with the new title of "hero." This may sound contradictory, but as Standish explains:

"It is difficult to begin without borrowing", Thoreau writes, but, as with an axe that you borrow, you can return words sharper than you received them. (2006, 151)

He considers "a crucial aspect of our ongoing acquisition of language" to be "the condition of continual rebirth (Ibid., 149-150)." Similarly, teachers can learn from literature on what teachers are, take the image and mission of teachers, make it shaper, and elaborate it through their daily practices in the society. That is the redefinition of the profession of teaching through Cavellian education.

This is how an alternative teacher education should work. Teacher education should not merely be a means of reproducing copies of the same type of teacher one after another. In contrast, it aims to revitalize the language of teachers with self-transformation as its core factor. Cavell clarifies that "we have a choice over our words, but not over their meaning. Their meaning is in their language; and our possession of the language is the way we live in it, what we ask of it (1972, 63)." From Cavell's point of view, the nature of teaching is contradictory. Teachers choose words in their language community, and simultaneously, through their word choices and usage, they try to reconstruct their language. This is the process of transforming their identities as teachers. In order to enable this twisted engagement, they need to step back and make themselves aversive to the convention in which they have been submerged. Taking this step is what Cavell and Thoreau mean by philosophy as "questioning." This is a task of teacher education: encouraging teachers to survive a difficult time by inviting them to conversation (with oneself, with other teachers, and with other people in their society, either in person or through reading and writing) that questions the state and language in their society and allows them to redefine their being by trying to respond to the questions they raise. Social transformation is not a matter of a chain effect or an accumulation of self-transformation. Rather, it emerges as a hero's epic writing—writing as bringing back much sharpened words, that is to say, rediscovering new meaning within the writing, and self-questioning the language in which we live.

5 Conclusion

This article has examined teacher education, with a special focus on how it can empower teachers to reorient themselves in the midst of a disoriented and disorienting social context. As the recent literature concerning education demonstrates, embattled teachers are forced to resign their traditional role and status that had been secured in the era of modernization. This paper tries to reclaim a space in teacher education in which teachers are “equipped and encouraged to develop their own philosophy of education (Hogan and Smith, 2003, 178).” Teachers as philosophers of education should contribute to society by recounting and questioning, with a voice emancipated by, and emancipating, their awakening, in the midst of crisis. This is simultaneously the process in which teachers are to be alarmed, so as not to fall into a state of self-complacency. They should deliberately avoid the temptation to withdraw from society in the name of philosophical awakening. Thus, the argument of this paper concludes with a calling for teacher education as a place (either conceptual or tangible), for teachers to be engaged in social transformation through revitalizing the language community, as Thoreau did in his epic writing. As teachers are initiated into and recreate society through language, helping them to be engaged in philosophical inquiry is the most *practical* as well as urgent task of teacher education. Cavellian teacher education is thus considered to be an ongoing process of perfecting the educative conversation of teachers and learners.

Philosophy as is discussed in this paper does not provide us presumptions for becoming a better teacher. Instead, the vision of Cavellian teacher education inspires teachers’ potential voice of questioning. Conversely, it reveals uniqueness and richness entailed by Cavell’s reclaim of philosophy. Cavell’s dialogue with Emerson and Thoreau represents a reinterpretation of Emerson’s notion of the reading and rewriting found in Thoreau’s philosophy of writing. This is by no means an idealistic conversation among sages, but rather, it represents Cavell’s continuous quest of a better self, realized in the process of constituting a better society. In this regard, he reclaims philosophy as education, a dimension of life in which a theory and practice are unified.

Notes

- 1 J. Lenore Wright points out that the relationship between *sensei* and disciples in Japan is something analogous to ancient Greek educational associations, typically found in Socratic dialogues (2005, 61-76).
- 2 Saito draws this expression originally from John Dewey, as a term to describe “a state of darkness in which the gleam of light, the sense of being and becoming, are dimmed and even lost (2005, 120).”
- 3 Carlos A. Torres says that “as globalization blurs national sovereignty,” discussion of education must go beyond assumptions about national goals, which are “internal to national agendas (2002, 363).”
- 4 Eldridge notes that the name of John Dewey can be listed, along with other philosophers, since he shares the same pursuit of freedom. Eldridge shows reluctance, however, to situate Dewey in the tradition of Emerson and Thoreau. One of the reasons is that it may depreciate Dewey’s utilitarianism in return (2003, 189). Indeed, Cavell asserts that Dewey’s pursuit is not “Emersonian”(1990, 15). To Cavell, Dewey’s thinking tends to be directed toward solutions of problems, while Emersonian philosophers try to capture philosophy as movement in finding directions (Ibid., 21).
- 5 Considering the fact that “the initial version of *The Senses of Walden* was presented in 1971 (Cavell, 1972, vii),” it seems that what Hammer implies by “civil unrest” and “warfare” is the turmoil concerning the Civil Rights Movement and Vietnam War in the sixties and early seventies.

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